



## **News Release**

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### **Utah Names New Medicaid Director**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) has announced the appointment of Michael Hales as the new director of the Division of Health Care Financing (DHCF). The Division administers the Medicaid and CHIP programs, with approximately 235,000 Utahns currently enrolled. The position of Division Director was previously held by Michael Deily who served in this capacity for more than ten years.

“This is the most important hire I’ll make during my tenure,” said Dr. David Sundwall, executive director, UDOH. Dr. Sundwall notes the level of expertise Hales brings to the position. “I have great confidence in Mr. Hales’ ability to manage and provide leadership for this important division.”

As the new Director, Hales will oversee the administration of the Medicaid and CHIP programs in compliance with federal laws and regulations. This includes managing the \$1.6 billion annual budget for Medicaid services and supervising the development and implementation of policy. “Medicaid is facing many challenges,” Hales said. “We have our work cut out for us.”

Some of the new responsibilities on Hales’ plate include addressing the challenge of federal budget cuts and the elimination of dental and vision services for Medicaid recipients. Hales will continue coordinating rate setting with health care providers, securing access to care for Medicaid clients, and writing waivers to modify the Medicaid program to best meet the needs of Utah citizens.

Hales’ expertise, in-depth knowledge of the Medicaid program, and demonstration of leadership has prepared him well for this position. He served as acting director of the Division of Health Care Financing following Michael Deily’s retirement in December

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2005, as well as assistant director of the division since 2003. Among Hales' eight years at the UDOH, he also served as financial analyst and auditor, actuarial specialist and Director of Utah's CHIP program. Michael Hales holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University, with a focus in health care policy. He also holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management from Brigham Young University.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*